

Dutch, Danes and Swedes do most for world's poor

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Among the world's richest nations, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden do most to curb global poverty, a new report suggests.

The "Commitment to Development" index conducted by the Center for Global Development (CGD), a Washington-based think tank, lists twenty-one rich countries according to their development policies in areas such as aid, trade or investment.

Among the EU member states included, Greece, Italy and France feature at the bottom of the table.

Japan comes in last on the list due its low aid donations and high barriers to imports and migrants from poorer nations.

The UK - one of the loudest supporters of the pro-development agenda in 2005 - is 12th in the annual index.

But it tops the table in terms of investment in poor countries and in its global environment policies.

CGD president Nancy Birdsall said there was a "steady" improvement in commitment to poverty reduction in recent years but it still falls short of promises by top politicians.

Washington was particularly criticised as although it donates the largest amount in absolute terms it is the smallest amount in relation to the size of its economy.

Part of the US' aid is also contingent on the purchase of the country's goods, notes the report.

On the other hand, the US and three other non-European countries - New Zealand, Australia and Canada - feature as the best in terms of trade, as their barriers to exports from developing countries are not as high as those from some EU member states evaluated in the Commitment to Development Index.

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